

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05 TRSE-00 AID-05 /099 W
-----086479 151651Z /10

R 121105Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2200
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMEMBASSY DARESSALAAM
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 GABORONE 1368

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PDEV, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: NKOMO VISIT TO BOTSWANA

REF: STATE 116307

1. SUMMARY: MINEXTAFF ARCHIE MOGWE BRIEFED UK, NIGERIAN AND ZAMBIAN HICOMS AND ME MAY 11 ON NKOMO'S MAY 8-9 VISIT TO BOTSWANA. AT REQUEST OF UK HICOM AND MYSELF, THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY PRESENTATION OF TALKING POINTS ON NAMIBIA (REPORTED SEPTTEL) AFTER APPROPRIATE SWITCH IN PARTICIPANTS, I.E. FRG AMBASSADOR JOINED US; NIGERIAN AND ZAMBIAN HICOMS LEFT THE MEETING. NKOMO LEFT NO DOUBT OF PATRIOTIC FRONT'S (PF) EAGERNESS FOR ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE (APC) OR OF NEGOTIABILITY OF SOME OF ITS POSITIONS. HOWEVER, PF POSITION ON OTHER ISSUES STRUCK
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GOB AS NON-NEGOTIABLE, I.E. PF INTENTION TO DOMINATE TRANSITION PERIOD AND TO ASSUME A POLICE ROLE. GOB IS PROMOTING APC AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE IN BELIEF THAT TIME WILL ONLY HARDEN POSITIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. BACKGROUND: GOB HAS BEEN THOROUGHLY TIED UP THIS WEEK BY TWO EVENTS: THE NKOMO MAY 8-9 VISIT AND PREPAR-

ATIONS FORIPRESIDENT KHAMA'S FOUR-DAY STATE VISIT TO UK BEGINNING MAY 16. IN DEFERENCE TO GOB'S PREOCCUPATIONS, MY DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES AND I AGREED TO CONSOLIDATE MEETINGS WITH RANKING GOB OFFICIALS. MINISTER MOGWE AGREED AND ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE FOR DE-BRIEFING ON NKOMO VISIT VOLLOVED BY MEETING ON NAMIBIA AFTERNOON MAY 11. MOGWE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY JOE LEGWAILA, SENIOR PRIVATE SECRETARY TO PRESIDENT KHAMA, AND LEBANG MPOTO-KWANE, PERMSEC MINEXTAFF.

3. MOGWE BEGAN BY SAYING NKOMO HAD SAID "NOTHING NEW OR DIFFERENT" FROM WHAT GOB HAD HEARD EITHER AT DAR SUMMIT OR SUBSEQUENTLY. NKOMO HAD REQUESTED MEETING TO BRIEF PRESIDENT KHAMA ON PF POSITION. WHEN NKOMO'S DECISION TO COME BECAME KNOWN, GOB ARRANGED FOR HIM TO VISIT REFUGEE CAMPS IN FRANCISTOWN AND SELEBI-PIKWE TO SEE THE "CONGESTION AND PROBLEMS" GOB HAS TO CONTEND WITH. WHEN NKOMO SAW THE TWO CAMPS THEY WERE FILLED WITH NEARLY 9,000 REFUGEES -- IN FACILITIES DESIGNED FOR 1200.

4. MOGWE OUTLINED NKOMO VIEWS ON KEY POINTS AS FOLLOWS:
A. DAR MEETING: NKOMO INSISTED PF HAD MADE "CONSIDERABLE CONCESSIONS" AT DAR, E.G. ON RESIDENT COMMISSIONER (RESCOM), UN PRESENCE AND READINESS TO ATTEND ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE. NKOMO THOUGHT THE UK AND U.S. HAD BEEN "DRAGGING THEIR HEELS" SINCE DAR, EITHER FOR REASONS OF INDECONFIDENTIAL

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CISION OR DESIRE TO LET EVENTS TAKE THEIR COURSE. NKOMO WONDERED ALOUD ABOUT WHAT GRAHAM "IS UP TO". NKOMO TOLD KHAMA THAT PF "CANNOT MOVE AWAY FROM DAR POSITIONS" ON SEVERAL KEY POINTS INCLUDING PARTICIPATION IN POLICE FUNCTION BY "THREE-MEN-IN-A -JEEP" AND "DOMINANCE" IN GOVERNING COUNCIL (GC). HE DEFENDED THIS CLAIM ON GROUNDS THAT PF SACRIFICES BROUGHT ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS; IF PF DID NOT HOLD OUT, IMPRESSION WOULD BE CREATED THAT THEY HAD "CAPITULATED". GOB DEDUCED THAT PROPOSED 8-3-1 REPRESENTATION IN GC WAS NEGOTIABLE.

B. INTERNAL SETTLEMENT: PF REFUSED TO ACCEPT INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, WHICH IT REDICULED AS NOTHING MORE THAN CONTINUATION OF SMITH'S ROLE. NKOMO SAID SMITH STILL HAD FULL POWER OVER ARMY, JUDICIARY, PUBLIC SERVICE, LAND QUESTIONS. NKOMO EXPRESSED SURPRISE OTHERS COULD ACCEPT INTERNAL SETTLEMENT.

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R 121105Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2201

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

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5. BOTSWANA'S REPLY. MOGWE SAID PRESIDENT KHAMA HAD RECOGNIZED THAT PF HAD MADE SOME CONCESSIONS AT DAR, E.G. ON RESCOM. HOWEVER, THESE CONCESSIONS HAD BEEN "NULLIFIED" BY CLAIM TO DOMINANCE ON GC. PF CLAIM HAD "DISCOURAGED" PARTICIPANTS AND DELAYED MEETINGS INCLUDING POSSIBLE ENCOUNTER WITH THE SALISBURY GROUP. IT WAS UNREALISTIC, PRESIDENT KHAMA REPORTEDLY TOLD NKOMO, TO RESTRICT ROLE OF UN FORCES OR JUSTIFY TRYING TO KEEP SMITH FORCES IN THE BARRACKS. NKOMO ACKNOWLEDGED PF HAD TAKEN HARD-LINE ON UN ROLE EXPLAINING THAT THEY THEREBY HELD IN RESERVE THEIR FINAL POSITIONS (I.E., CONCESSIONS) FOR ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE. IN MOGWE'S VIEW, PF THUS UNMISTAKEABLY INDICATED THAT UN ROLE AND COMPOSITION OF GC WERE NEGOTIABLE AT AN ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE. MOGWE ADDED THAT HOVE INCIDENT WAS DISCUSSED; THERE WAS AGREEMENT THAT SMITH WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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MOST UNHAPPY AT MUZOREWA'S WITHDRAWAL FROM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES. CONTRARY TO IMPRESSION THAT EXCOM DECISIONS WOULD BE UNANIMOUS, THE DECISION ON HOVE WAS APPARENTLY TAKEN WITHOUT MUZOREWA. A DISILLUSIONED HOVE HAD LEFT THE COUNTRY.

6. MILITARY AFFAIRS. NKOMO EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT NONE OF HIS PEOPLE WOULD BE DECEIVED BY SALISBURY APPEAL TO RETURN AND LAY DOWN THEIR ARMS. NKOMO BOASTED THAT HIS PEOPLE KNOW WHAT THEY ARE FIGHTING FOR AND SAID ENCOUNTERS WITH RHODESIAN FORCES WERE ESPECIALLY HEAVY IN THE NORTH. NKOMO ADDRESSED THE SUSPICION THAT HE WAS HOLDING BACK HIS FORCES AND "KEEPING SOMETHING UP HIS SLEEVE". NKOMO SAID THIS WAS WHOLLY UNJUSTIFIED, NOTING THE ALLEGATION CAME ONLY FROM OUTSIDERS OR THE PRESS; HIS "FELLOW PF LEADER MUGABE" HAD NO COMPLAINT. AS FOR NEW RECRUITS, NKOMO SAID THE PF DID NOT WANT SCHOOL CHILDREN WHO, ALONG WITH WOMEN, WERE ADDING TO ALREADY LARGE BURDEN IN ZAMBIA CAMPS. (THERE WAS DIFFERENCE OF OPINION AMONG GOB OFFICIALS AS TO WHETHER HE ALSO SAID HE HAD ENOUGH ABLE-BODIES RECRUITS.) THIS LED TO DISCUSSION OF DIFFICULTY ZAPU HAD IN FEEDING ITS PEOPLE IN ZAMBIA, WITH WHICH ZAMBIAN HICOM AGREED. NKOMO VOICED SUSPICION THAT SMITH "STAGE MANAGED ABDUCTIONS" OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN TO BOTSWANA FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES. AS FOR MILITARY SITUATION IN RHODESIA, NKOMO SAID THAT, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THERE ARE AREAS IN RHODESIA WHERE GUERRILLAS CAN OPERATE FREELY. AND THERE ARE REGIONS WHERE RHODESIAN CAN NO LONGER PATROL ON FOOT BUT OPERATE IN FAST-MOVING VEHICLES OR OBSERVATION PLANES. MOGWE COMMENTED THAT PF ATTACK ON HOTEL IN EASTERN RHODESIA SEEMED EVIDENCE THAT THE GUERRILLAS HAVE CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CONFIDENCE OR THAT RHODESIAN FORCES ARE THIN IN SOME AREAS. MPOTOKWANE SAID NKOMO
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SEEMED DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT PROPOSALS TO PUT PF FORCES IN BARRACKS OR DISARM THEM. SMITH CAN RELY ON HIS POLICE AND TERRITORIALS WHO ARE ARMED AND TRAINED. NKOMO FELT HE, TOO, COULD ONLY RELY ON HIS OWN MEN.

7. REFUGEES. NKOMO EXPRESSED SURPRISE AND SATISFACTION AT GOOD TREATMENT ACCORDED REFUGEES IN BOTSWANA AND WAS APPRECIATIVE OF THE SUBSTANTIAL ADDED BURDEN ON THE GOB. HICOM TURNER ASKED WHETHER NKOMO HAD REACTED TO THE "SQUALID" FRANCISTOWN CAMP; MOGWE SAID NKOMO HAD NOT MADE ANY SPECIAL COMMENT EXCEPT TO THANK GOB FOR WHAT IT WAS DOING. NKOMO CONSENTED READILY TO PROPOSED RE-SETTLEMENT CAMP FOR REFUGEES. PREPARATIONS ARE ALREADY UNDERWAY AT VILLAGE SOME 70 MILES INLAND FROM FRANCISTOWN. MOGWE SAID THE OBJECTIVE WAS STRICTLY RESETTLEMENT; IT WOULD EMPHATICALLY NOT BE A BASE OR A RECRUITMENT CENTER. RATHER IT WOULD SEEK TO PROVIDE NORMAL CIVILIAN LIFE. NKOMO'S ACCEPTANCE WAS TAKEN AS FURTHER INDICATION HE HAS NO NEED FOR MORE RECRUITS FOR HIS FORCES.

8. MOGWE THEN INVITED US TO ASK QUESTIONS WHICH BROUGHT OUT THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL POINTS:
A. UK/US DISTRUST OF PATRIOTIC FRONT PROMISES OF CONCESSIONS AFTER DAR: MOGWE SAID PRESIDENT KHAMA HAD TOLD NKOMO IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS THAT PF COULD NOT EXPECT TO MAINTAIN UNREASONABLE POSITIONS SUCH AS 8-3-1 COMPOSITION OF GC. TO DO SO DESTROYED THEIR CREDIBILITY AND PEOPLE WOULD NOT NEGOTIATE. LEGWAILA SAID, HOWEVER, THAT ON SUBJECT OF POLICE THE PF "HAD A POINT". THEY SHOULD NOT BE PUT IN A POSITION WHEREBY SMITH'S POLICE FORCES REMAIN ARMED AND IN AUTHORITY AND FREE TO WORK WITH UN FORCES WHILE PF IS EXCLUDED FROM ANY ROLE. LEGWAILA SAID PF "WILL BE SUPPORTED" ON POLICE ISSUE AND SUGGESTED THAT THE CONCEPT OF THREE-MEN-IN-A-JEEP BE ACCEPTED.

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R 121105Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
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INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
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B. AUTHORITY OF GOVERNING COUNCIL AS AGAINST RESCOM:
MOGWE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ON THIS ISSUE PF HAD RAISED FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS; ITS CLAIM TO "DOMINANT ROLE" IN TRANSITION PERIOD WAS DIFFICULT AND STILL PRESENTED AS NON-NEGOTIABLE. GOB UNDERSTOOD UK/US DISAPPOINTMENT AT DAR MEETING AND HAD URGED PF TO KEEP FLEXIBLE AND ASSURE THAT ITS DEMANDS WERE WITHIN REASON.

C. TIMING OF ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE. MOGWE SAID NKOMO'S ENTHUSIASM FOR ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE WAS OBVIOUS. UK HICOM AND I COMMENTED BY SAYING IN DIFFERENT WAYS THAT WHILE IT WAS DESIRABLE TO MEET ON THINGS THAT WERE NEGOTIABLE, IT WAS POINTLESS TO DISCUSS THINGS NON-NEGOTIABLE. FOR US, THERE COULD BE NO COMPROMISE THAT WOULD ALLOW PF DOMINANT ROLE IN TRANSITION OR SUBORDINATE RESCOM OR UN FORCES TO GOVERNING COUNCIL WITH PF MAJORITY. MOGWE RE-
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ITERATED GOB ADMONISHMENT TO PF THAT ITS POSITIONS HAD TO BE KEPT WITHIN REASON. BUT HE URGED THAT UK AND U.S. MOVE QUICKLY TOWARD ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE. BOTH SIDES ARE PRESENTLY IN DOUBT ABOUT WHERE THEY STAND; PF IS NOT ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT ITS FORCES WILL NOT HEED CALL TO LAY DOWN THEIR ARMS; SALISBURY GROUP HAS NO REASON TO BE CONFIDENT THAT ITS APPEAL TO PF FORCES WILL SUCCEED. IF THE SALISBURY GROUP APPEAL FAILS, THEY WILL BE RELUCTANT TO ATTEND APC BECAUSE OF WEAKNESS. IF NKOMO FORCES RETURN IN LARGE NUMBERS, PF WOULD NOT ATTEND FOR THE SAME REASON, I.E. APPARENT WEAKNESS. THEREFORE, NOW IS THE TIME TO MOVE WHILE BOTH SIDES ARE AWAITING THE OUTCOME AND "NO ONE IS AHEAD".

D. MUZOREWA'S STATUS. GOB BELIEVES MUZOREWA PERSONALLY IS IN A MOOD TO LISTEN TO ALTERNATIVES TO SALISBURY INTERNAL SETTLEMENT BUT THAT HE IS SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE LIKE CHICKEREMA AND NYANDORO WHO HAVE IRREVOCABLY THROWN IN THEIR LOT WITH SALISBURY GROUP AND HAVE NO WHERE ELSE TO GO.

E. GRAHAM-LOW MISSION. MOGWE ASKED WHERE THEY WERE GOING AND WHAT THEY WOULD DO; NKOMO SAID HE HAD HEARD GRAHAM WOULD BE "BASED" IN SALISBURY. HICOM TURNER STOUTLY DENIED THIS. WE EXPLAINED PURPOSE OF GRAHAM-LOW MISSION WAS TO CONSULT WITH VIEW TO ARRANGING ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE. TURNER SAID HE UNDERSTOOD GRAHAM HAD BEEN TOLD NOT TO RETURN TO LONDON UNTIL HE HAD SUCCEEDED. MOGWE AND WE AGREED THAT APC COULD NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL AFTER KAUNDA AND KHAMA RETURNED FROM THEIR RESPECTIVE VISITS TO LONDON BEGINNING THIS WEEK AND CONTINUING THROUGH NEXT. MOGWE AGAIN STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF NOT DELAYING UNTIL ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER BELIEVES IT HAS THE UPPER HAND. AS THINGS NOW STAND, MOGWE FEARED THAT NEXT DISCUSSION OF RHODESIA WOULD BE IN KHARTOUM IN JULY.

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